









In regard to the question of railway connection between Hongkong and our new territory in Burma, we are glad to be able to state that Government is already moving. The Bengal Central Railway will carry out surveys eastwards from near Calcutta through Nepal; and we trust that, in view of the importance of a separate connection by land, will not be lost sight of. The proposed line of the Bengal Central Railway will help to secure our Province against anxiety from famines, when the vast rice supply of Eastern Bengal is thus directly within reach of railway transport, and the immense rice and jute trade from these districts will also be served more rapidly and safely than at present.—*Feisner.*

#### 'FRAGRANT WATERS' MURMUR.

That the Diveson House has shown very good results, and General Cameron hit the nail on the head, in his brief speech, when he said "Deeds are better than words."

That it is to be hoped Admiral Sir Nowell Salmon will follow up his manoeuvres at Singapore with the organisation of a sham night attack on Hongkong Harbour.

That such a movement would help to familiarise people with what the real thing might be (if such an emergency should ever arise), and show our defenders where the weak points are.

That the gallant Admiral may perhaps wait until the memorable shore guns are in position, and he has in reality something to attack.

That I congratulated the performers in the "Sorcerer" on the success of their performance, and gladly commend the Committee of the Choral Society on the "wise discretion" they have shown in the distribution of their charities.

That a good deal of noised lion has lately been washed in public, and though the press may have plausible grounds for making details public, nothing can palliate the prurient curiosity that carried some members of the community to the Police Court—quite by accident.

That the few who shined in that direction cannot advance extreme youth as in any way offering an excuse for their presence.

That it is creditable to the "giddy youths" of the Colony, that most of them, apparently stayed away.

That I noticed some of those ancient misdeeds attempted to condone the offence with their consciences by putting in an appearance at morning service the following day.

That Kowloon is making rapid progress towards civilisation, as shown by this week's Flower Show.

That Kowloon-Super-Mare presented quite a brilliant spectacle, on Tuesday morning.

That I won't go quite so far as make reference to a "garden of beautiful women," still I saw a very fair sprinkling of pretty faces about equally divided between coy maidens and mature matrons; and also some very pretty summer frocks.

That an interesting feature in the Show was some very bonnie wee human "rose-buds."

That all these accessories, combined with good music, bright sunshine, and most hospitable treatment at the hands of the Committee, made the afternoon a most enjoyable one.

That Mr Dorabji's genial countenance has almost become part and parcel of all such exhibitions, towards which he has always so successfully assisted.

That I beg to offer the promoters my hearty congratulations on the great success of their tentative efforts, and to express a hope that they will not rest upon their well-earned laurels.

That strangely enough the luscious Strawberries shown were nearly all eaten on the premises, while the 14-inch carrots and the 3-pdr. cabbages remained intact.

That I had a fancy that a first-class private hotel built on or near those beautiful grounds would soon be filled.

That a correspondent asks "in what respect the Ten Commandments have proved a failure."

That in so far as Moses himself succeeded in breaking them all at one time, they may be looked upon as somewhat of a failure.

That I believe this explanation has not been advanced before.

That a native Canton paper writes it is not the French Consul but Mr Pittman who has become the fortunate possessor of a six-legged pig.

That the lucky owner of a porker possessed of six hams will surely have little difficulty in going the whole hog.

That I shall be extremely obliged if any of your readers will kindly explain the meaning of the expression "a hog of bacon" as used in Kent.

That a "hog" is an expression for a "shilling" in some parts of Ireland, but as an Irish hog may bear some resemblance to an Irish bull, the Kentish expression of a "hog of bacon" remains unexplained.

That an Irishman from Limerick reminded me to-day, by his "wearin' o' the green," that this was really St. Patrick's Day.

That one might have thought the unanimous decision of the Referees upon the protest entered against the Nymph winning the Douglas Challenge Cup would have closed the case.

That the tone of some of the comments, both before and after the decision, is not such as was wont to pervade amateur yachting in Hongkong.

That I am afraid "Sea Serpent" is wriggling somewhat in his endeavour to extract more from the winner's letter than was intended.

That the full statement of facts is presumably in the possession of the Referees only, and upon that evidence alone can their decision be adversely criticised.

That it might have been well had the reasons been given for the decision, although even then all parties might not have been satisfied.

That if, as I am led to believe, the winner did much more to land the steam-launch to the reef than the steam-launch people possibly could have done to the yacht owing to ignorance; and if, as I also understand, the steam-launch ought to have been at the White Rocks to mark the spot, then the winner of the Douglas Challenge Cup deserved praise rather than protest.

That the interpretation question seems likely to remain very snugly in that pigeon-hole, after the time-honoured custom of Crown Colonies.

That the British Consular and Colonial services have long proved a fine recruiting ground for the Imperial Customs, and that the fault is ours.

That Volapuk has not a ghost of a chance against crisp Anglo-Saxon, which is destined to be the universal language.

That Germany compels her sons to speak English, and that the citizens of America speak it with variations; so that its universality is almost secured already.

That the sturdy old General recalls the days of "old Pan" by again carrying the German people with him, and securing peace because he was ready for war.

That speaking of prestige, it was about time the British Representative at Peking opened his mouth to say something, but it could hardly have been expected that the something would have been against British enterprise.

That the air of Peking has doubtless disagreed with Sir John Walsham, and a run home would be beneficial generally.

That there has been a "muckle cry" about the opening of the West-River, but no more.

That Hongkong should endeavour to open up closer relations with the Northern Australian Territory, as the possibilities of mutual profit are very considerable, and will become greater if the Chinese are excluded.

That the difference between the Surveyor General and the Steam Dredger is that the first is simply Price and the other is simply beyond Price; the dredger has been on view at Kowloon for some days past.

That Hongkong has been called by many names: "The Malta and Gibraltar of the East," "The Model Colony," "Gladstone Junction," "The Abode of Bliss," "The Isle of Fragrant Streams," and (in some quarters) "The Home of the Dollar-Grinders;" but why it should be dubbed "The Isle of the Sirens" I am at a loss to say.

That the Low Level Tramway is one of the next wants of the Colony.

That as there is a great dearth of cheap houses for Europeans, and we cannot all afford to drive our own carriages, more certain means of communication must be found between the business quarter and the numerous sites still available.

That the Guild question must be taken up by the Government here sooner or later, and all virtual monopolies held by Chinese through the power of these Guilds broken up or restricted.

That I am glad to note the manifest improvement in the condition of Mercantile Jack in this port.

That the besomber nuisance is much abated, and Mr Goldsmith's report is encouraging.

That much good would result if Jack could be induced to abandon his inveterate habit of growling and to obey orders given by his officers with cheerfulness and alacrity; he would soon find the advantage.

That your Meteorological Contributor is evidently one who "knows how the wind blows" and can observe the peculiarities of the weather as well as of the Observatory folks.

That I think it would be advisable to time all the special weather changes to arrive here either at the hour of 10 a.m. or 4 p.m., and intimate that "no others need apply."

That this fog is playing ill-natured pranks with mail steamers—keeping the Englishman in harbour for six hours and the Frenchman outside for a longer period.

That speaking of mail steamers, our Governor is establishing a reputation as a cosmopolitan: Canadian Pacific, P. & O., Messageries, and the German have all had a turn.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

##### MAILS TO NATAL.

To the Editor of the "CHINA MAIL."

Hongkong, 17th March.

Sir,—Could nothing be done to improve the means of communication between China and South Africa? At present letters from here are sent to England, and are forwarded from there to Natal, occupying about three months on the passage. There are surely some points in the route between China and England in communication with South Africa at which mails could be transferred; and if so, it would surely be possible for the Postmaster-General to ascertain at what time letters should be posted here in order to catch the joining mail and be delayed as little as possible en route. People would not object to pay the double postage now demanded, but they feel the inconvenience of having to wait six months for a reply to a letter.—*Yours.*

DISPATCH.

#### THE FIRE BRIGADES.

To the Editor of the "CHINA MAIL."

Hongkong, 17th March 1888.

Sir,—What I contend is, that it is posterously unjust on the tax-paying community generally, that they should have to bear the entire cost of maintaining the Fire Brigades. Fire insurance when well conducted has hitherto proved a profitable investment, and it is only just that those reaping the benefit should bear a reasonable proportion of the expenses that are entailed for dealing with fires. In the principal cities of Europe this mode of assisting in keeping up Government Brigades has been adopted, presumably on the ground that it is the most equitable on the whole. Our Government may depend upon it, that in their desire to do justice to all sections of the community, they cannot do better than follow the practical common sense shown by the London Corporation in their fire bill. Taxation on any other principle will never meet with home sanction.

Nothing is more wanted in Hongkong than an intelligent reorganization of the Government Brigade with a practically trained staff at its head.

Although year by year the City is vastly increasing, the same rule of thumb is followed, and the same old steam engine is kept at one station, with the result that long before even one steam engine can be dragged—say to West Point—it generally happens that two or three houses are destroyed. That no proper organization exists is but too palpably evident, as once by two or three engines being dragged half way to East Point and then turned back, the modest shanty having perhaps burnt itself completely out—or been successfully dealt with by the hand manual. Only a week ago a fire broke out within 150 feet of the Central Fire Station, but before they can get fairly to work for houses are destroyed. There is nothing more rotten in the Government of Hongkong than the scandalous use that has been made of a system of patronage that could sanction the position of Fire Superintendent being entrusted to one whose incapacity is so notorious. Until some one is appointed who can see the side of dealing with fires from adjoining roads, instead of invariably using the hose from the roadway level only, as is usual here, so long will the destruction caused continue on its excessive scale.—*Yours.*

#### S. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL ORGAN FUND.

The following Statement of Accounts relative to the Organ Fund is submitted for the information of the Seatholders and Congregation of the Cathedral.

I. The Builders' Account, (Abridged.)

Cost of Organ	£ 1,600	s. 4	d. 0
Freight 10 per cent.	160	10	0
Freight	64	2	4
Insurance	16	8	1
Assistant's passages and time	276	0	0
Memorial Brass (ordered)	10	15	0
	£2,104	15	5

Draft, 7.4.85	£ 817	10	0
Cheques, 3.3.87	1,104	2	4
Cash in Hongkong	15	11	0
Draft, 9.1.88	60	15	0
Balance	106	16	7
	£2,104	15	5

\* This is an obvious overcharge, it has been thought better, however, to close the account as if correct, and to recover the amount overcharged as soon as particulars are obtained. The sum recovered will be carried to credit of the Fund.

II. The Trustees' Account.

Payment a/c 3/8/85	\$4,004.43
Do, a/c 3/1/87	1,767.92
Do, a/c 3/1/88	100.00
Do, a/c 3/1/88	888.90
Do, a/c 3/8/88	639.50
	13,468.75

Foundations	\$ 584.03
Organ Chamber	825.00
Iron Joists	93.51
	1,502.54

Hotel expenses of Assistant	144.69
Labour, and Coolie-hire	65.00
Debit Interest	70.08
	\$14,951.03

Fête in Public Gardens	5,830.0
Fête in City Hall	1,573.61
Offertories	3,263.02
Organ Recitals	158.20
Sale of old Organ	250.00
Sale of Picking cases	403.00
Concert	248.44
E. Sharp Esq.	250.00
Sundry donations	201.40
Balance	2,624.00
	\$14,951.03

Including \$128.80 interest.

A. LISTER, Secretary and Treasurer.

Examined with vouchers and found correct.

JAMES H. COX, J. H. STEWART LOCKHART, Auditors.

Hongkong, March 16th, 1888.

STATUS OF FOREIGN MAIL.

STEWAMERS IN BRITISH COLONIES.

"Telegraph" writes a correspondent to the "Manchester Guardian," that the British Government is preparing to grant to foreign mail steamers in British Colonial ports, in allowing them the status of men-of-war, is to be seriously brought before the House of Commons during the ensuing session. The various Chambers of Commerce in Colonial ports, from Kurrachee to Hongkong, have taken the matter up vigorously, for the members feel that not only are British ships—mail steamers and others—thus placed at a disadvantage in our own ports, but no similar advantages are given to British mail steamers in foreign ports, such as Brindisi and Marseilles. Two members connected with the trade of Eastern ports, having canvassed the matter among their friends and acquaintances in the House, have been encouraged to take steps which will insure the subject being debated, and the opinion of the House being obtained on the anomaly. When the Ordinance giving these privileges was brought before the Legislative Council of Ceylon by order of the House Government, it was only after it had been voted against it, and it was only carried by the votes of the officials in the Council.

COERESPONDENCE OF THE SUBURB.

As will be remembered, the matter was first taken up by the Hongkong Chamber of Commerce. The Committee wrote to the Chambers in the principal British Colonies and Dependencies throughout the world and have received replies from most

of them. The following are some of the answers received:—

(From Singapore Chamber.)

Singapore, 9th June, 1887.

Dear Sir,—Your letter of date 21st May, together with the printed Circular Letter dated 20th May, on this subject, has been received with the cordial consideration of our Committee.

In reply I am to inform you that this Chamber entirely agrees with and endorses the views expressed in the circular letter and is prepared to support and co-operate with the Chamber in a joint memorial to the Secretary of State, on the lines indicated in the recent resolution of your Chamber and in the last paragraph of your circular letter.—I am, &c.,

ALEX. GENTLE, Secretary.

The Secretary, Hongkong General Chamber of Commerce, Hongkong.

(From Rangoon Chamber.)

Rangoon, 11th June, 1887.

Sir,—I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your Circular Letter of 20th ult. respecting the assistance of this Chamber in getting the practice of giving the Status of men-of-war to subsidised mercantile vessels of Foreign Governments abolished.

In reply I am directed to inform you that this Chamber entirely concurs in the views expressed in your letter now under reply, and is prepared to join in sending a joint memorial to H.B.M.'s Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to try and effect this end.—I have, &c.,

J. STUART, Secretary.

To the Secretary, Hongkong General Chamber of Commerce.

(From Colombo Chamber.)

Colombo, 18th June, 1887.

Sir,—I am in receipt of your circular letter of 20th May, 1887, upon the subject of the Status of Ships of War, according to certain vessels of Foreign Countries.

In reply I am directed to state that the Chamber of Commerce of Ceylon, in entering into the views expressed in your letter as to those of the Hongkong General Chamber of Commerce, and that this Chamber will be prepared to join in a memorial of the nature indicated in the concluding paragraph of your letter.

It may be supposed that the course of legislation in the two Colonies has been very similar. Bills have been introduced into the Ceylon Legislature under instruction from the Imperial Government. They have been uniformly opposed by the representatives of the Mercantile community and other Unofficial members, who have advanced arguments identical with those contained in your letter. The bills have, however, on each occasion been carried by the official majority.

BENJ. BOYS, Chairman.

A. P. McEwen, Esq., Vice-Chairman.

H.K. Gen. Chamber of Commerce.

(From Kurrachee Chamber.)

Kurrachee, 4th July, 1887.

Dear Sir,—In reply to your circular letter dated 20th May, regarding certain concessions granted by the Government of your Colony to some Foreign Mercantile lines of Mail Steamers.

I am directed by my Committee to say, that so far as the case has been stated, you have the sympathies of this Chamber. The Committee, however, do not see their way at present to assist in the matter, but when a joint representation is determined upon, this Chamber would be glad to add its support to any movement to abolish the granting of special advantages to Foreign Subsidised Mercantile Steamers over British Steamers.—I am, &c.,

HARRY W. BROOK, Secretary.

The Chairman, Hongkong General Chamber of Commerce, Hongkong.

(From Madras Chamber.)

Madras, 11th July, 1887.

Dear Sir,—I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 20th May, requesting the co-operation of this Chamber, together with those of sixteen other Chambers of Commerce, in a simultaneous joint memorial to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, urging that all regulations granting to Foreign Mail Steamers the Status of Men-of-war in British waters be rescinded and that only Mail Steamers carrying criminals be free from the operation of the law of "Letters Carries."

In reply I am to inform you that the action of your Chamber in this matter has the full approval of this Chamber, and that this Chamber is prepared to sign the Memorial whenever it is forwarded.—I am, &c.,

S. R. TURNBULL, Chairman.

To A. P. McEwen, Esq., Vice-Chairman, Chamber of Commerce, Hongkong.

(From Bengal Chamber.)

Calcutta, 18th July, 1887.

Sir,—The Committee of this Chamber having considered your circular of 20th May, 1887, on the question of the Status of vessels of War granted to the Messageries Maritimes Company, and the matter to the Port Officer, Calcutta, by whom they are informed that in Calcutta "the vessels of the Messageries Maritimes or other Foreign trading vessels are treated like any other trading vessels so far as this Office is aware, and have no exceptional privileges."—I am, &c.,

S. R. TURNBULL, Chairman.

To A. P. McEwen, Esq., Vice-Chairman, Hongkong General Chamber of Commerce.

(From Penang Chamber.)

Penang, 23rd August, 1887.

Sir,—Referring to your Circular dated 20th May last, asking for this Chamber's support to your resolution, to memorialize the Imperial Government, to abolish the practice of granting to Foreign Mail Steamers the Status of Men-of-war, I am instructed to send you the words of a resolution passed by this Chamber at a general meeting.

"That this Chamber resolve to support the Hongkong Chamber of Commerce in their Memorial to the Imperial Government, with reference to the Status of Foreign Mail Steamers in these waters, and that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Hongkong Chamber of Commerce."—I am, &c.,

W. AYRA, Secretary.

The Chairman, Chamber of Commerce, Hongkong.

#### SUPREME COURT.

IN ORIGINAL JURISDICTION.

(Before the Hon. J. Russell, Acting Chief Justice, and a Special Jury.)

Saturday, March 17.

YU TEE WAN v. GARRETS and REUTER.

The hearing of this case was resumed to-day. The Attorney General (Hon. E. L. O'Malley) and Mr Robinson, instructed by Messrs Caldwell and Wilkinson, appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr E. J. Akroyd, instructed by Messrs Wotton and Deacon for the defendants.

Mr Garrets, re-examined for the defence, said, in reply to Mr Akroyd, "I am quite sure that before taking proceedings I knew the names of the owners of the Pang Yu Tai. When I said to plaintiff we could only pay a proportional amount he did not say anything about additional goods. If I had not had all the information I spoke of yesterday I would have paid. I had given instructions for the arrest of plaintiff before the interview of 2nd April. The offer of settlement was used as a means to keep him there. Lau Ngok in his evidence stated that it was on 19th March plaintiff first spoke to him. That was the day that the additional assurance was made, which increased the whole amount to \$40,000."

By the Court—Mr Deacon said he was well acquainted with Wong Chuk Lum. He did not say how he knew him. He said he knew him as a witness at the Police Court. I don't know why the Court should be called upon to give evidence. I suppose the same was the case with regard to the matter of the Pang Yu Tai. When I went on the roof of the Pang Yu Tai I looked to see if there was any tea in the burned building. I expected to see some remains of boxes.

By Mr Akroyd—On the 28th February plaintiff's interpreter told me plaintiff had insured with us expressly for the purpose of covering his tea.

Mr Reuter, examined for the defence, said—Mok Akum handed a statement to me on the day after the fire. Plaintiff had been to see me in the morning. Mok Akum spoke of the result of his examination of the books. The claim then made was \$14,800. He said he and the plaintiff had made up the statement together.

After the claim had been put in with Messrs & Co. for the Mok Akum informed me that he had distinctly said to me that he had any quantity of tea on the premises. That was when they had finished going over the books. Plaintiff said there had not been much; only samples. It was Mok Akum who told me subsequently that he had found somebody who could give evidence. Before we went to see this man at Messrs Wotton and Deacon's office, I had made up my mind what to do. We had not decided to prosecute. We were not anxious to prosecute. It was certainly not in my interest to prosecute as it would give me lots of trouble and annoyance and might spoil my business to a no extent. When I heard the confession I concluded that the story was true. I have always in the past followed the advice of my lawyer. When plaintiff came to my office with Messrs Caldwell and Wilkinson's clerk it is very likely I had talked about settling the thing to keep plaintiff in the office, following Mr Deacon's instructions. I made him no serious offer. On the basis of the first statement we should have settled the matter. There had been no suspicious circumstances.

By the Attorney General—We were never prepared to settle before we had concluded our inquiries. I don't think I was in communication with Messrs Meyer on 25th Feb. It is probable that our correspondents were in communication on the subject. Mok Akum did not tell me why he came to see me about tea. My correspondents must have known that plaintiff was dealing in tea. I prosecuted because there was no other way left to protect the interests of our companies. Certainly thought the plaintiff deserved some consideration. He never came forward with any explanation. If we had communicated our suspicions he would certainly have run away. I know he would because I have had experience of it. I should certainly have run away if I had been suspected of arson and had done it. I think it is impossible that plaintiff could have carried on a tea business and a drug business in the same premises. It is not done in any other house in the colony. Tea would certainly be spoiled by being stored in the same place with drugs. The house is not a particularly large one.

By Mr Akroyd—The strong-smelling goods I refer to are cinnamon, cassia, ginseng, birds' nests etc. Strong-smelling goods are not taken on the same steamer with tea.

By the Court—A tea-merchant gave evidence in the criminal trial. I don't remember him saying that he had seen tea and drugs stored in the same shop.

Mok Akum—I am a comprador for Messrs Pustan and Co. When I spoke to plaintiff about tea he said it was only samples he had, which were not worth counting on. When he afterwards put in a claim, for tea I told Mr Reuter about this.

By the Attorney General—If there is a goods stock book the balance is usually carried over in one item to the new book. Plaintiff had asked me to purchase tea. He told me he was going to engage in tea at the time when he was insuring. He wrote to me saying he wished to insure. I wrote to him about it, and he authorized me to do so. He sent me a list of tea afterwards. When I asked him if the statement included all goods, he said "What means are there?" I said "There are no particular means in insurance customs. I don't know what he meant by that. That

in the upper floor of the Man Yuen Tong, and sent coolies over to warn the Man Yuen Tong, which they found the doors closed. They called out to the Man Yuen Tong people that they had fire inside, but they replied they had no fire. A short time afterwards all the doors were burst open and the people rushed out. I reported this to Mr Garrets on the 28th March. I was present at the interview in Mr Garrets's office with the plaintiff and the defendant. The first Yu Tze Wan and a friend of his said they had a fire last night and wanted to claim on the policy. Yu Tze Wan's interpreter Yu Wong said this. I had heard before that there was something wrong and being rather busy I had conducted them at once to Mr Garrets's office. Mr Garrets at once called out and sent me to Mr Garrets's office.

When Yu Tze Wan wrote his statement on a piece of paper and Mr Garrets signed him repeatedly if that was all Yu Wong said "Yes, of course; he would not put down more, neither more nor less." Our interpreter told Yu Tze Wan to write the statement. Yu Tze Wan wrote the statement on the 28th with two men. On that occasion his own interpreter Yu Ki Wo said plaintiff must claim \$20,000 more for tea. I again directed him to Mr Garrets who saw the men and asked why they did not tell him anything about that before. Plaintiff's interpreter said "We don't tell anything before as the books were all lost by the fire." I pointed out that he was fully covered by the previous amount and the interpreter replied that this claim was simply for the tea. The interpreter said plaintiff might have forgotten about the tea before going to see Captain Deacon about the matter. I had not heard of Lau Ngok.

By the Attorney General—The insurance was effected in our office on 25th February. I know that he was insured with Messrs Pustan then. I believed the insurance was then simply a transference of the risk from one insurer to another for effecting this insurance. The comprador's book-keeper told me that plaintiff was to insure with us. He submitted the proposal. Yu Tze Wan had come to the comprador's office and said he wanted to insure, and the comprador's book-keeper put the proposal on paper and brought it to me. I could not tell him that him as my limit was full. I knew he was insured with Messrs Pustan and was all right there. It was not the fact that our limit was full. Afterwards did insure him; the comprador recommended me to take the risk. He said "The man was insured with you formerly, and I thought you would make no objection of his premises. I did not see Yu Tze Wan." The interpreter who came with plaintiff on the second interview was not the same one as was present on the previous occasion. I thought it curious that he brought another interpreter. On the morning after the fire his master of the house came to our office and said the fire was a very bad and very curious one. He asked how much plaintiff was insured for. This was what first aroused my suspicions. One of the people in our office had also told me that morning that he had heard people say the fire was suspicious. He was examined as a witness at the Police Court. I don't know why the Court should be called upon to give evidence. I suppose the same was the case with regard to the matter of the Pang Yu Tai. When I went on the roof of the Pang Yu Tai I looked to see if there was any tea in the burned building. I expected to see some remains of boxes.

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